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THE WOOING OF GRANDMOTHER GREY

KATE TANNATT WOODS

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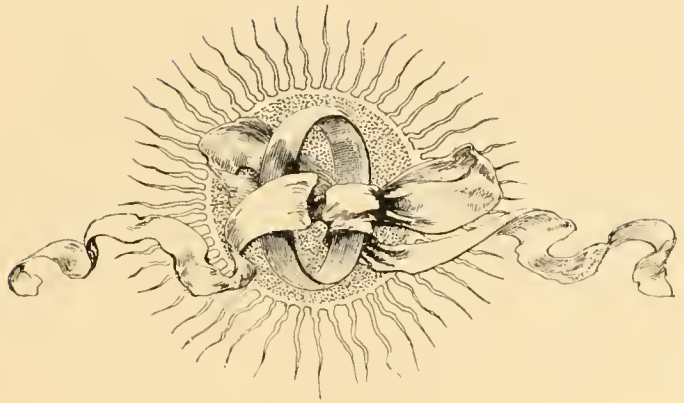

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THE

WOOING OF GRANDMOTHER GREY

BY

KATE TANNATT WOODS

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The Wooing of Grandmother Grey

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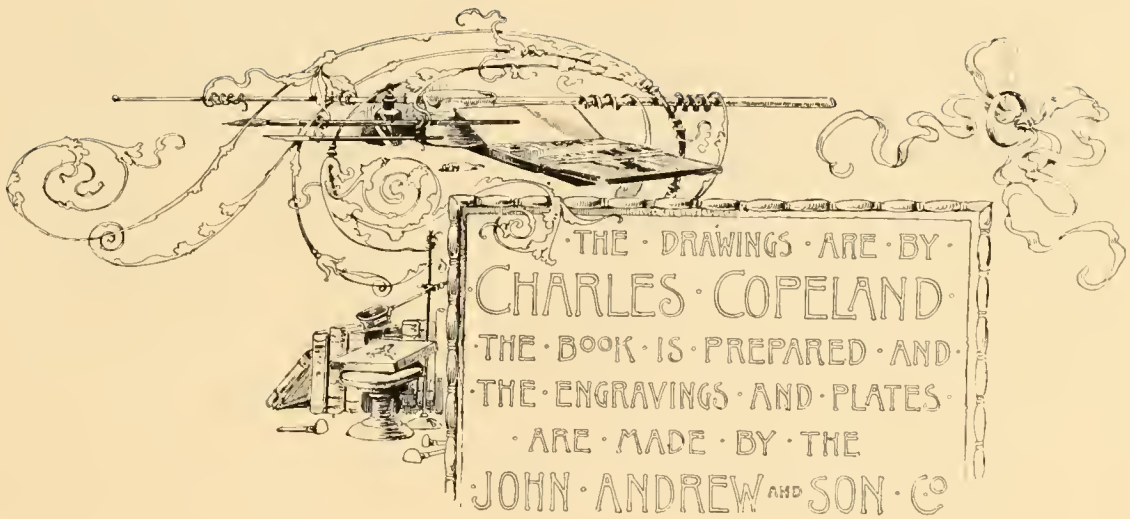
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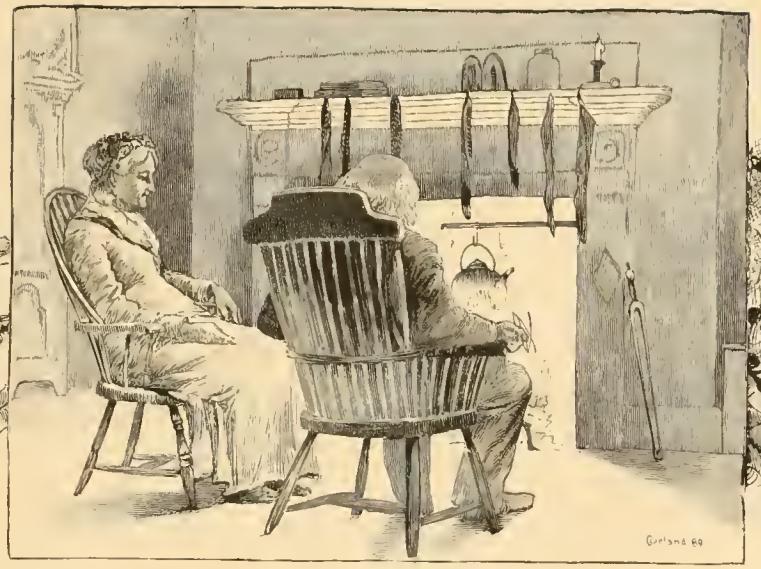
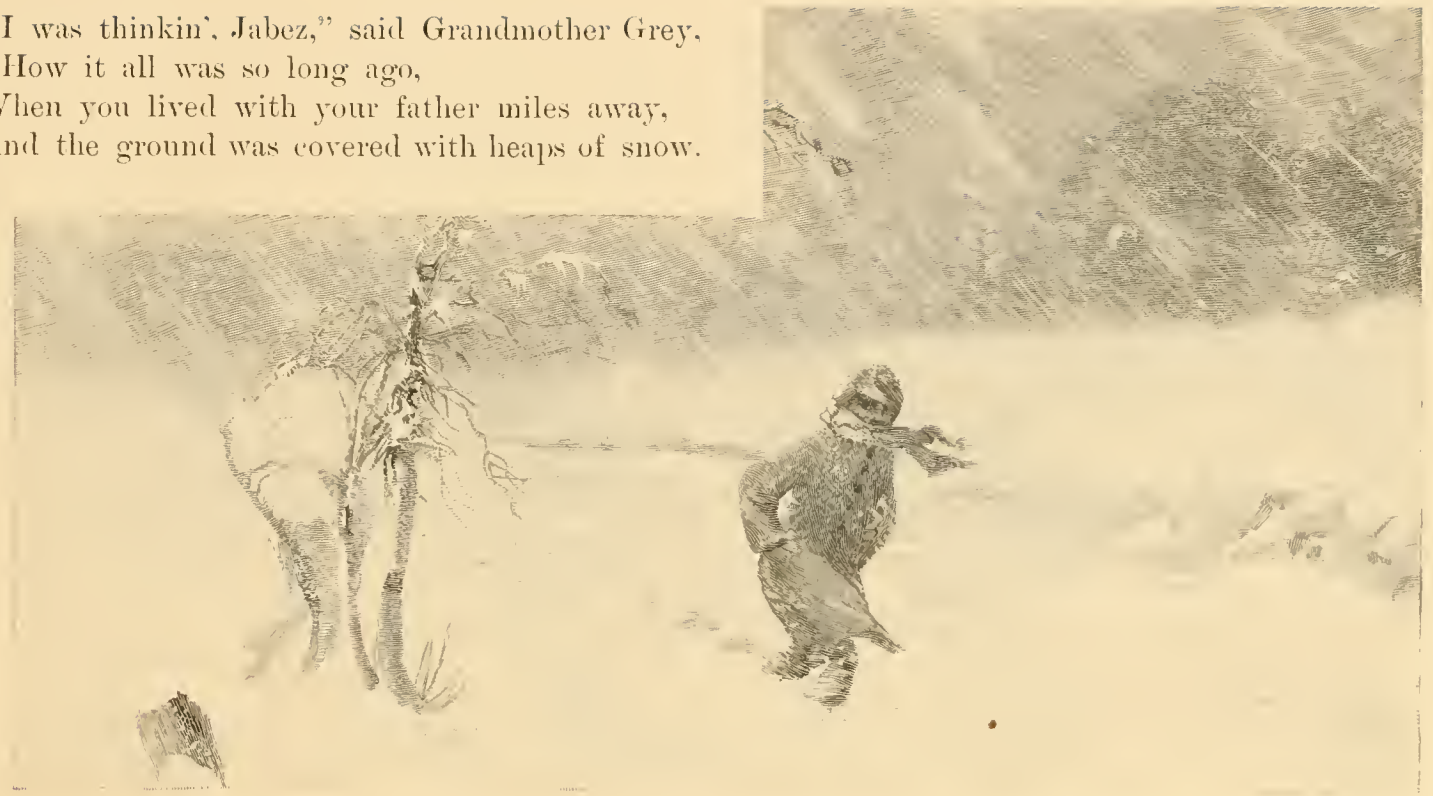


THE WOOING OF GRANDMOTHER GREY.

It was Christmas Eve, and the stockings hung
In varied hues before the fire,
And grandmother's kettle swung and sung,
As the sparks flew high and the smoke rose higher.

"I was thinkin', Jabez," said Grandmother Grey,
"How it all was so long ago,
When you lived with your father miles away,
And the ground was covered with heaps of snow.

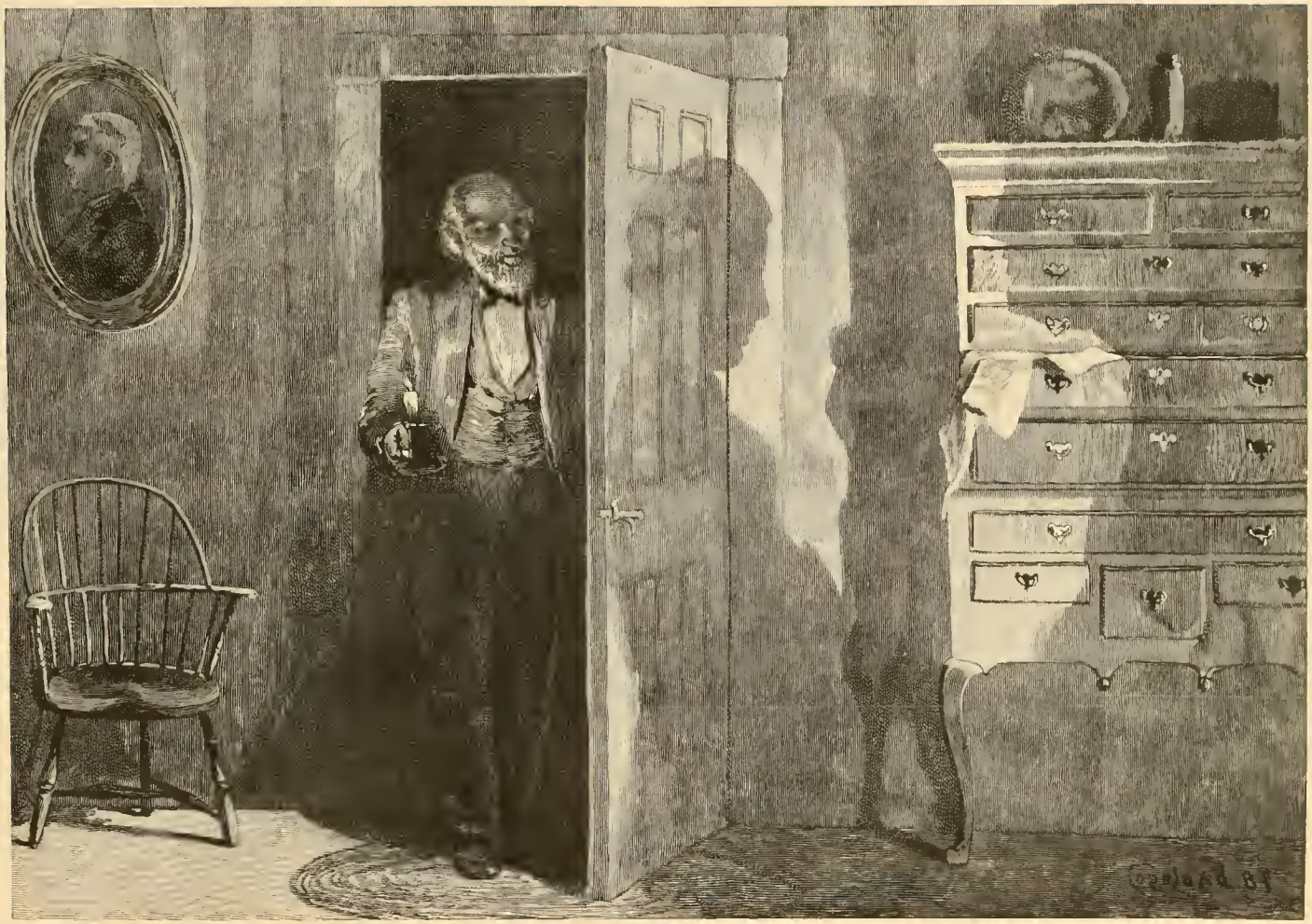


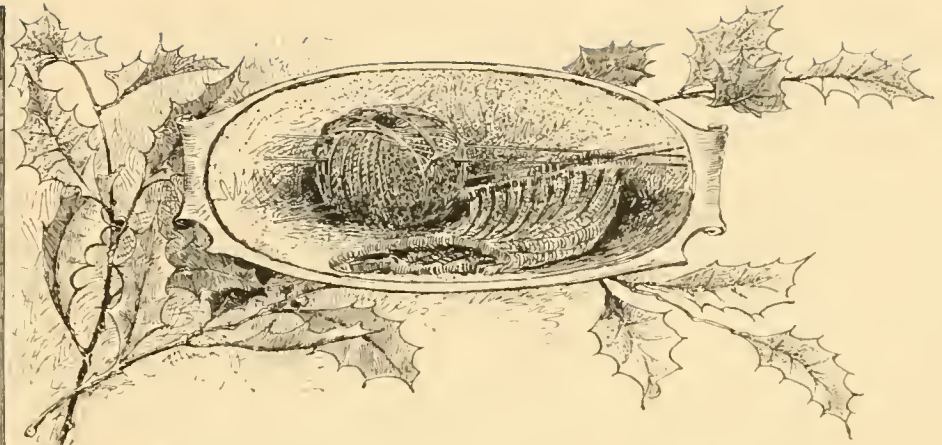
"Then Christmas was very different, you know:
I was young, and fair to see,
And, Jabez, you didn't mind rain or snow
When you came a-courtin' me.

"One night, land sakes, I remember it well, —
It was on a Christmas Eve, —
You said 'you had a story to tell,'
And I thought it make believe.

"You took from your pocket this little ring, —
It was larger then a sight,
And you tried it on my finger, you know;
Shall I ever forget that night?

"Oh, I was proud as a girl could be;
I had never a ring before,
And I wanted to cry and I wanted to laugh,
When Granpa opened the door.

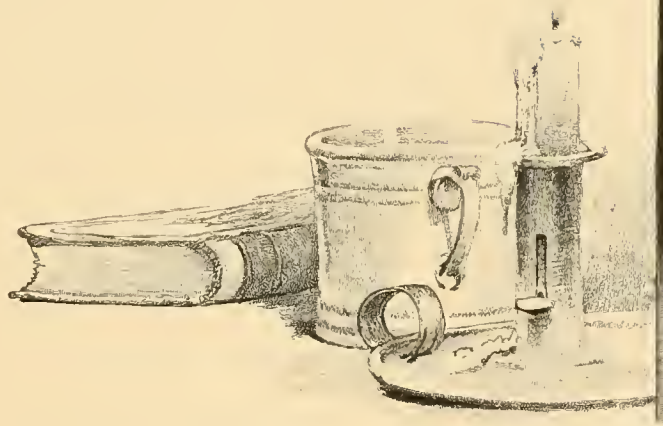


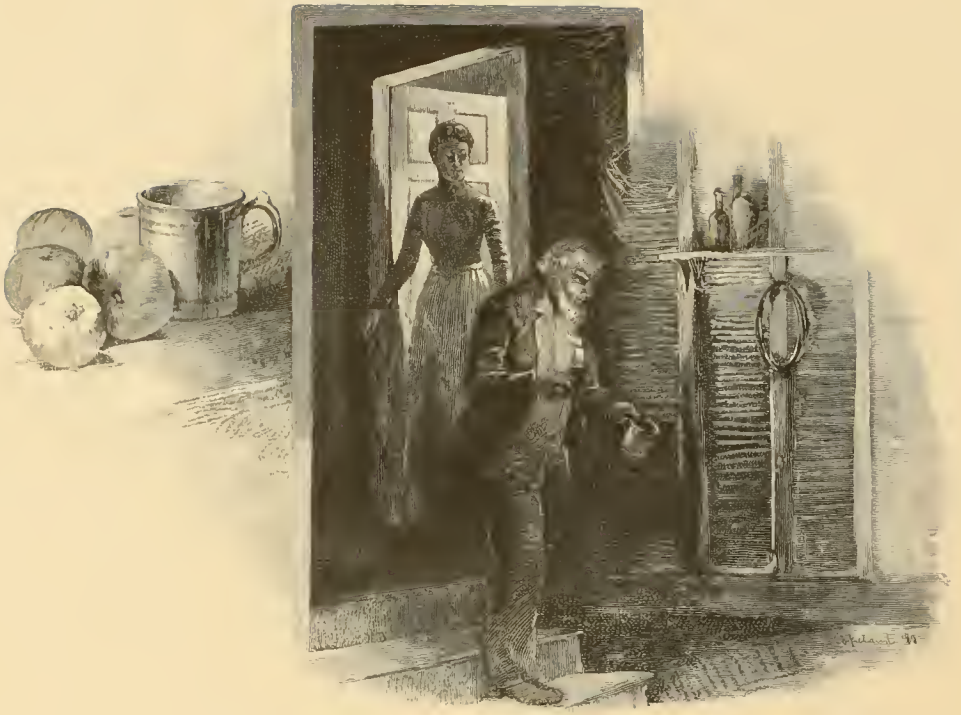


"I sot up straight as straight could be,
And pretended I'd dropped a stitch
In the old blue stockin' that laid on my knee,
And you gave your chair a hitch.

"Gransir he coughed a little, you know,
And my cheeks was red as fire,
And he said, as nat'ral as nat'ral could be,
'You hain't seen nothin' of Miah?'

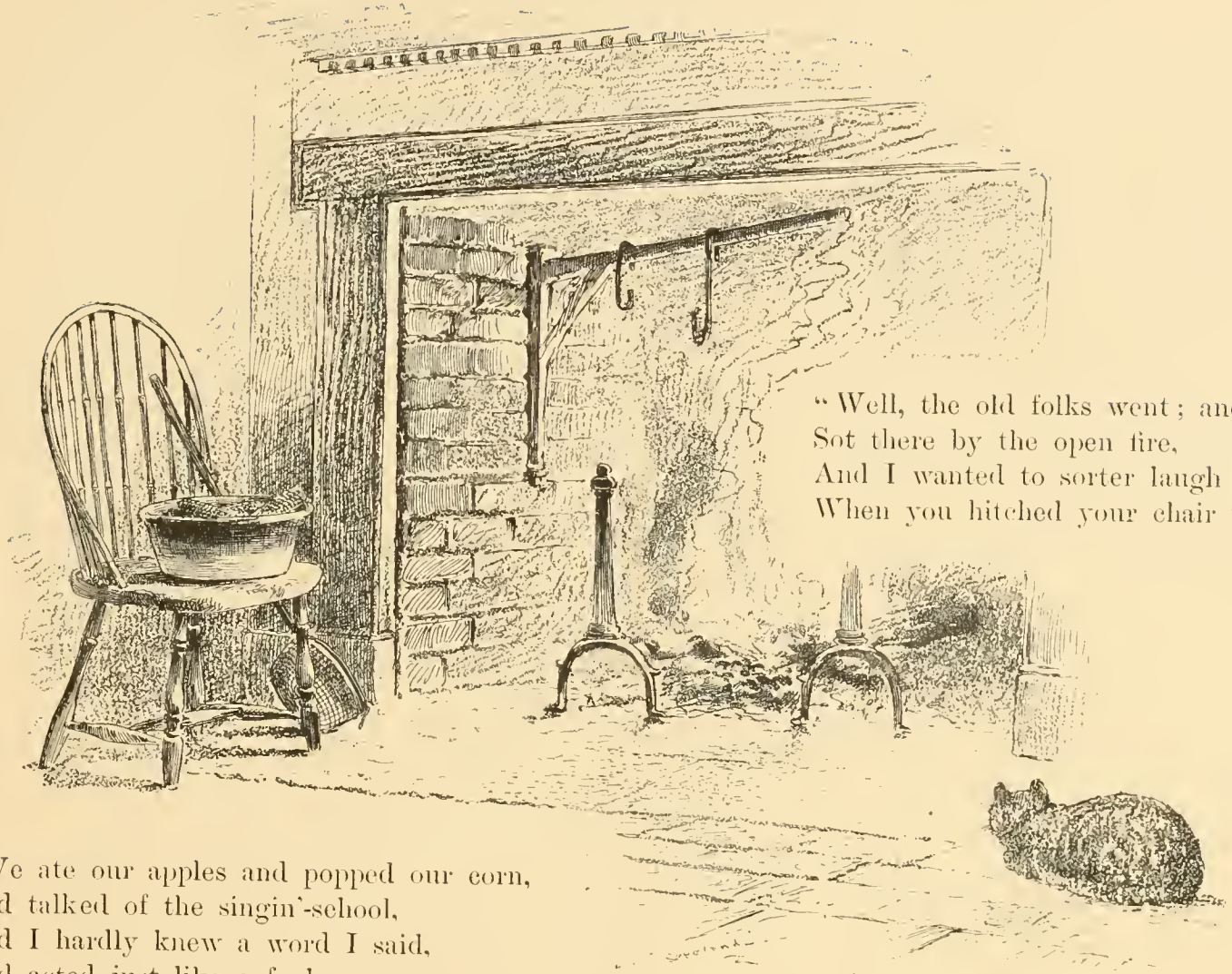
"And you said 'No;' but still I blushed,
And I 'most blowed out his light, —
A candle he held in his dear old hand;
Oh, I shan't forget that night!





"He went down cellar to fill his mug,
All striped with yellow and blue,
And I said, to cover my blushes up,
'Hold on; I'll go down too!'

"We filled the mug with cider old,
And my apron with apples red,
For you and I to eat upstairs,
When the old folks went to bed.

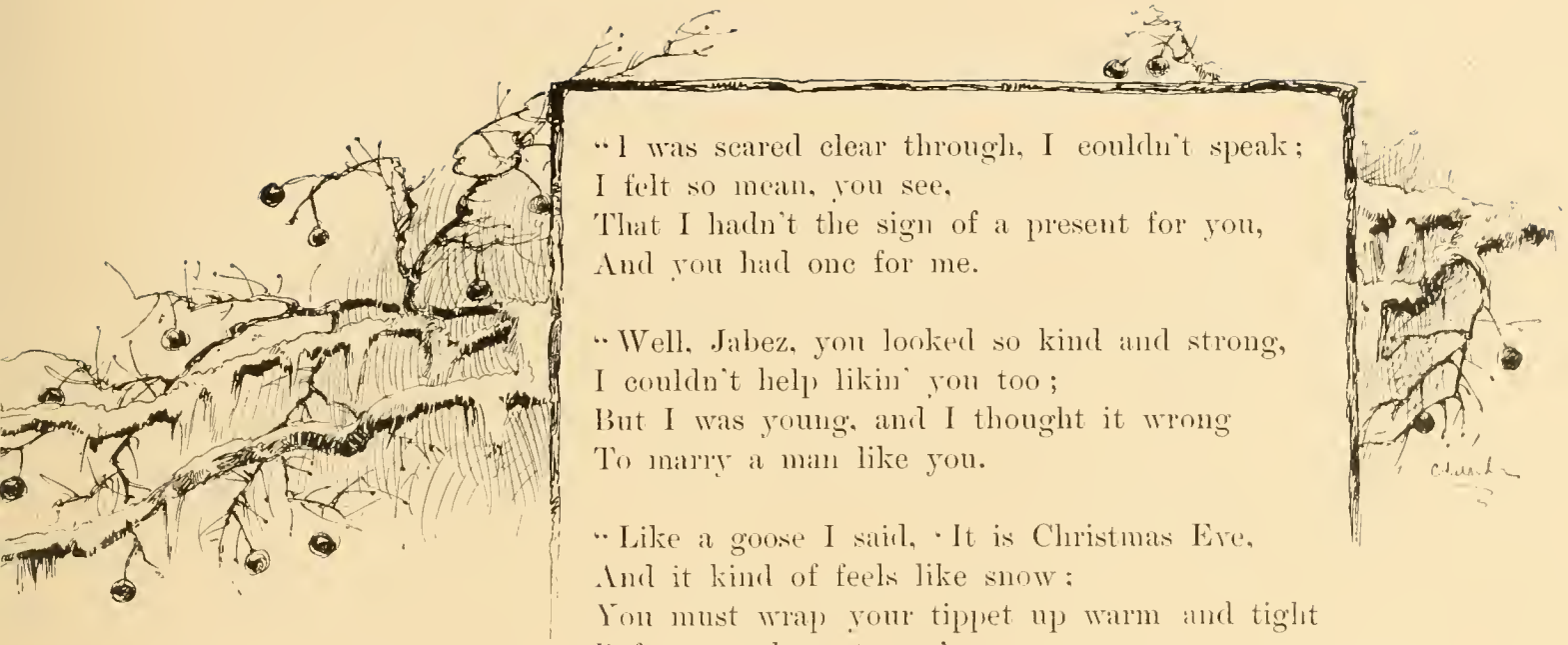


"Well, the old folks went; and you and I
Sot there by the open fire,
And I wanted to sorter laugh and cry
When you hitched your chair up nigher.

"We ate our apples and popped our corn,
And talked of the singin'-school,
And I hardly knew a word I said,
And acted just like a fool.

"And then when you kindly took my hand,
To see if the ring was right,
You kissed it, Jabez, — you know you did;
Ah, I can't forget that night!

"I trembled so, and my heart it thumped
Like it wanted to get away,
And you looked in my eyes so kind and nice,
And said, 'Would I name the day?'



"I was scared clear through, I couldn't speak;
I felt so mean, you see,
That I hadn't the sign of a present for you,
And you had one for me.

"Well, Jabez, you looked so kind and strong,
I couldn't help likin' you too;
But I was young, and I thought it wrong
To marry a man like you.

"Like a goose I said, 'It is Christmas Eve,
And it kind of feels like snow:
You must wrap your tippet up warm and tight
Before you have to go.'

"'I know it is Christmas Eve,' says you,
As proud as proud could be:
'But I'll stay here, however you hint,
Till you promise to marry me.'

"I was scared worse than ever, but up I spoke:
'I wish I'd a present for you,'
And you was so pert I thought I would choke;
You said, 'I must give you two.'

"'And one,'—oh, you had such a masterful way,—
'One was a kiss,' you said,
'And the other, to name our weddin' day,
Then you would go home to bed.'

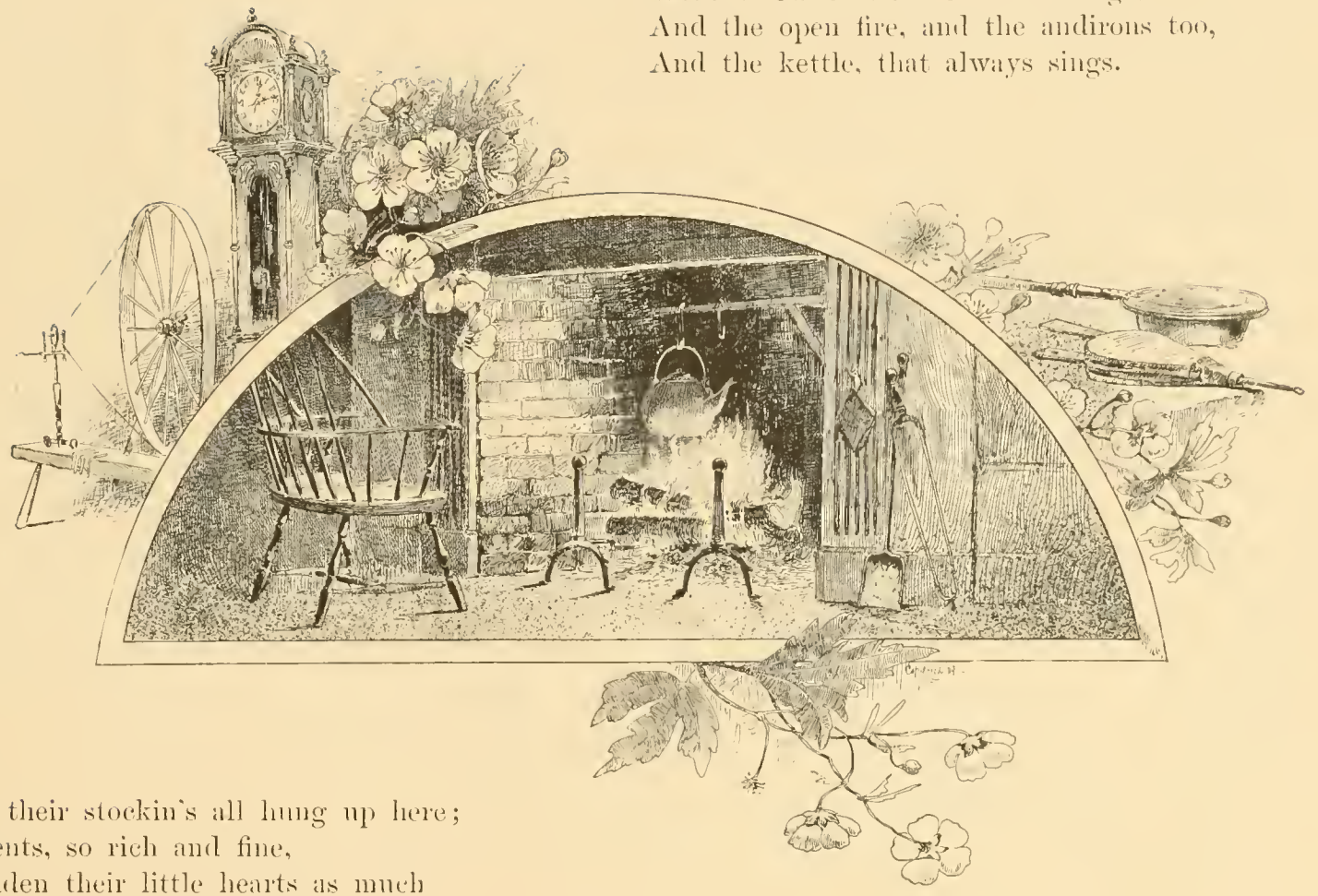
"It was awful tryin', — you see I was shy;
I could kiss my old dad, and the boys,
But you, I couldn't no ways in the world;
Besides, it might make a noise.

"My little heart fluttered and danced up and down,
Like a puddin' in mother's old pot,
And my hands trembled awful, I couldn't look up,
And my cheeks was just blazin' hot.

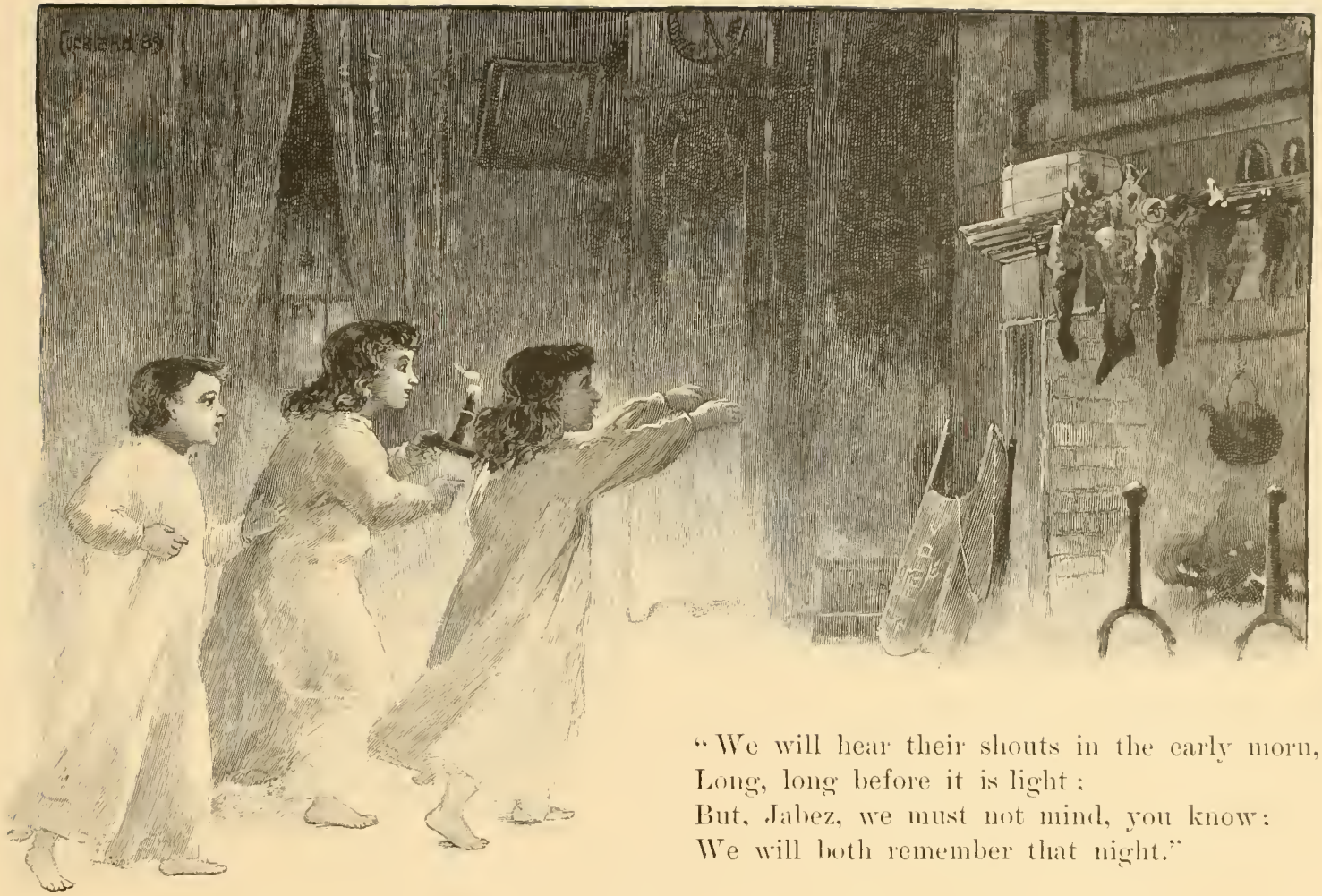
"'Well,' says you, 'Jerusha, if that is your way,
I'll take what you'll not give;'
And you kissed me over and over again;
You did, as sure as you live.

"It is years ago, and this old ring is worn;
Of trouble, we've seen a sight:
But, Jabez, somehow I'm always young
When I sit and think of that night.

"It is kind in the children to give us this room,
With a few of our dear old things,
And the open fire, and the andirons too,
And the kettle, that always sings.



"I wanted their stockin's all hung up here;
Their presents, so rich and fine,
Won't gladden their little hearts as much
As this old ring gladdened mine.



"We will hear their shouts in the early morn,
Long, long before it is light;
But, Jabez, we must not mind, you know:
We will both remember that night."

New Year's morning came, and Grandmother Grey
Was silent, and pale, and cold;
Just as the old year faded away,
The years of her life were told.

The children were there, with tears in their eyes;
The parents were whispering low,
"May our hearts be as young and pure as hers,
When we are called to go."

On one wrinkled hand was the old, old ring,
Thin, worn, and dull to the sight;
On the wrinkled face was a smile of peace:
She began a New Year that night.

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